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FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN

STATE RESERVATION COMMISSION.

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JANUARY, 1905.



BOSTON :

WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING CO., STATE PRINTERS,

18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.

1905.







DEER WITHIN THE ENCLOSURE UPON THE RESERVATION.

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APPROVED BY  
THE STATE BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

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## OFFICERS.

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### *Commissioners.*

A. G. BULLOCK.                      HAROLD PARKER.  
THEO. L. HARLOW.

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### *Superintendent.*

GUY H. CHASE.  
Address, Princeton, Mass.







BOLTON'S BROOK.



# Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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## REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS.

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In our fourth annual report we presented the necessity of establishing fire guards upon the reservation, and suggested at that time that an appropriation be granted for that purpose, but it was not favorably acted upon. We desire in this our fifth annual report again to emphasize the necessity of the establishment of these fire guards upon the reservation.

We wish particularly to refer to that portion of the report of our superintendent wherein he refers to the importance of providing such safeguards upon the reservation. At the risk of repeating what we have already stated in previous reports, we feel it our duty to again present this matter in as forcible a manner as possible. The commission believe that, unless some steps are taken in the direction of procuring proper and efficient protection against fire, the reservation will at certain seasons of the year be left open to a possible conflagration, and consequent serious loss to the State, which it would take many years to repair. The danger of this will be more apparent when it is considered that the reservation embraces at the present time over 1,300 acres.

As has been pointed out in the report of our superintendent, we have already been visited by one conflagration, which, had it not been for most favorable circumstances which existed at that time, would have proven a very serious loss to the Commonwealth. The necessity of these fire guards was at that time made apparent, and, in order that the property of the Commonwealth may be properly protected, we desire again to draw your attention to the necessity of an appropriation for this purpose.

Not less than \$15,000 will be required to properly establish these fire guards, and for the purpose of acquiring some small tracts of land which are very essential in establishing the proper natural boundaries of the reservation upon the travelled highways. We desire to point out, in connection with the establishment of these proposed fire guards, that not less than two of them should extend across the above-mentioned tracts of land which it is the desire of the commission to acquire for the State. It should also be borne in mind that these fire guards can at a comparatively moderate expense be eventually developed into comfortable roads over the different parts of the reservation, and in this way result in opening the same to the general public. It may not be out of place to say that at the present time there is but one road accessible for vehicles upon the reservation, and consequently but a small portion of it is available except to pedestrians.

This reservation is a very valuable possession of the State, and, as has been pointed out in our fourth annual report, provides a recreation ground for the people of the central portion of the State. To quote from this report: "Worcester County alone contains 1,600 square miles, or nearly 20 per cent. of the entire area of the State. Its population is over 350,000, and its valuation is about \$250,000,000." The reservation is being visited by larger numbers than in previous years, and is fast becoming a popular resort. Increased facilities for reaching it in the way of trolley lines are under contemplation, and, in the opinion of the commission, the reservation is becoming appreciated more and more every year.

In view of this fact, viz., that the public is making greater use of the reservation each year, the absolute necessity for better accommodations at the summit becomes more apparent. The old hotel is in part entirely ruinous, and cannot be properly repaired; it must be reconstructed. The money received from the county is, under the law, only available for purposes of maintenance; and the county cannot, even if willing to do so, build new structures on State land. The commission feel that something must be

done in the State's interest, and that our manifest duty would be neglected if we did not present the facts for your consideration, and suggest a means of preserving property under our care. The commission urge the appropriation of an additional sum of \$10,000, to be used in removing the ruinous parts of the summit house and adjoining buildings, and the erection of suitable structures in their stead.

The commission, therefore, recommend the passage of the following act: —

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT AND ENLARGEMENT  
OF THE WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN STATE RESERVATION.

*Be it enacted, etc., as follows:*

SECTION 1. A sum not exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars shall be allowed and paid out of the treasury of the Commonwealth, from the ordinary revenue, to be expended by the Wachusett mountain state reservation commission for the following purposes: for the construction of fire guards in and upon said reservation, and for acquiring, by purchase or otherwise, such lands adjoining the present Wachusett mountain state reservation as said commission may deem it necessary or advisable to acquire, a sum not exceeding fifteen thousand dollars; for the reconstruction of the summit house and adjacent buildings on Wachusett mountain in said reservation, a sum not exceeding ten thousand dollars.

SECTION 2. Said commission shall have the same power to acquire, take and care for such additional lands as are given to it by section four of chapter three hundred and seventy-eight of the acts of the year eighteen hundred and ninety-nine, and section two of chapter four hundred and ninety-six of the acts of the year nineteen hundred and one, in respect to the lands already acquired by the commission for said reservation. The additional lands taken or acquired under the provisions of this act shall form a part of said reservation, and the title thereto shall be and remain in the Commonwealth.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

Respectfully submitted,

A. G. BULLOCK,  
HAROLD PARKER,  
T. L. HARLOW,

*Commissioners.*



## REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT.

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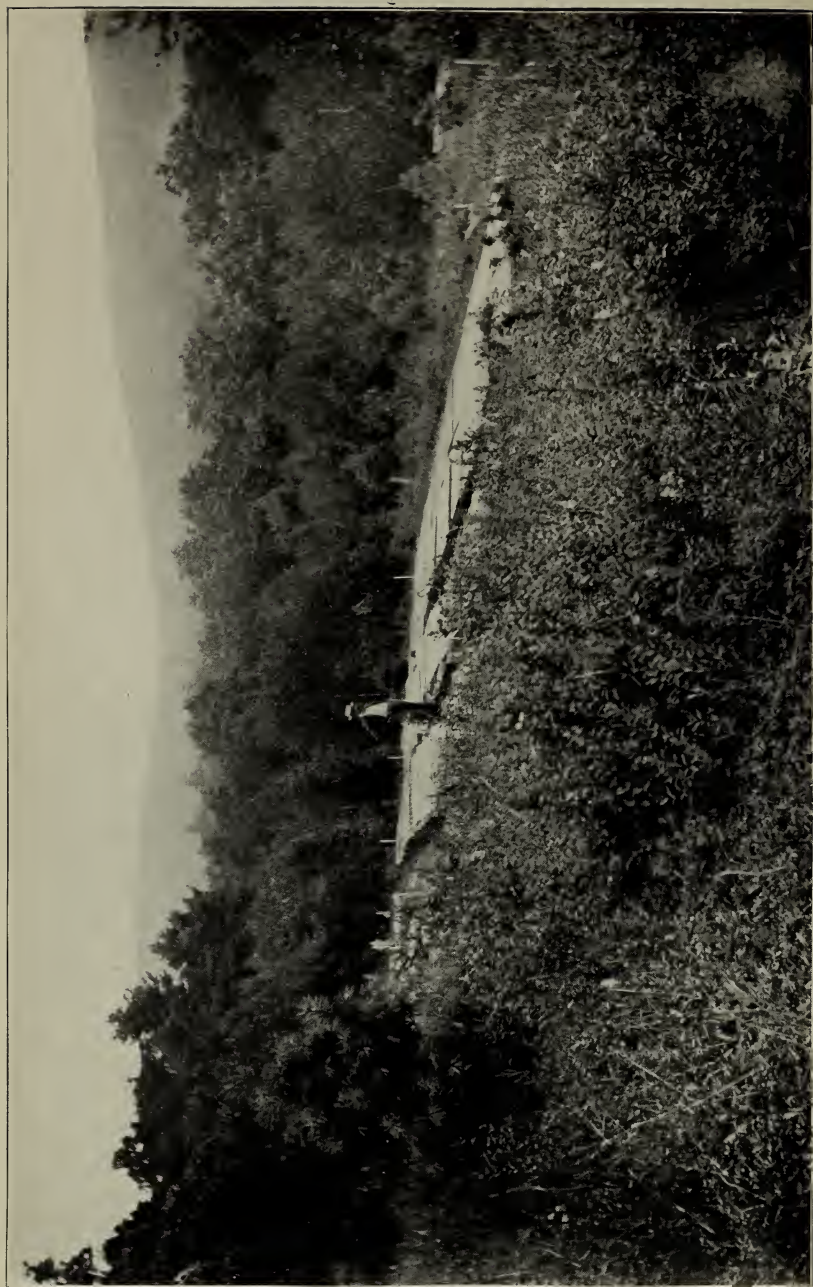
PRINCETON, MASS., Jan. 1, 1905.*To the Wachusett Mountain State Reservation Commission.*

GENTLEMEN: — The administration of the reservation having been under your direction, it is unnecessary to enter into detail of the work done during the past year; but I wish to again call your attention to the urgent need of fire guards or roads. In my last annual report to the Board I indicated upon a map the general lay-out of such roads or fire guards, and since that time I have built a section, and have other sections under way; but, unless the appropriation is materially increased, it will take many years to properly protect the reservation, while disastrous fires are liable to occur at any time. This is especially true of tracts of land open to the public, and a fire with slight headway under proper conditions might devastate the mountain.

As an illustration of this danger, I might state that a fire which started recently, and burned over about ten acres, killing every tree upon the tract, was finally extinguished only by a combination of favorable conditions, which would seldom occur. The fire occurred on the outside limits of the reservation, the direction of the wind was favorable, and the fire ran to an old brook bed that acted as a fire guard, and well illustrated their practical value.

With the intention of reforesting the waste lands of the reservation, and that portion where the growth is in a decline, we have established a nursery, in which we raise young conifers from the seed, for transplanting upon these areas. This nursery is started in a small way, but will be materially enlarged the coming spring. It will be unwise to plant extensive areas of young pines and spruces without adequate protection from running fires, for even a light surface fire will ruin a plantation of young transplants, which





THE NURSERY.



marks the beginning of a future forest reservation. I consider it not only good administration to protect the property of the Commonwealth from a danger of fire, but also a plain business of insurance against fire losses.

These fire guards are merely cleared strips about twenty feet wide, dividing the reservation into relatively small areas, upon which a fire may be controlled. These divisions may be subdivided by paths cleared to a width of six or eight feet, thus making the reservation accessible at all points. The guards and paths are laid out with due regard to the topography of the mountain; and, while the present purpose is to prevent the spread of fires and to provide means of reaching them with proper facilities for extinguishing the same, they may ultimately be made into very good driving roads and paths, at a moderate additional expense. Any delay in providing for these fire guards may be attended with serious losses.

The land upon which the nursery is located is leased land, and two of the fire guards are laid out across the parcel, and it is essential that an appropriation be made for the purchase of said parcel.

The relief map is well under way, and will be completed this winter. It is made upon a vertical scale of fifty feet to an inch, and a horizontal scale of two hundred feet to an inch. It will show with extreme accuracy the shape of the mountain, and, with the topography map which has recently been completed, will be of great assistance in all work of development of the reservation, not only for the present, but for years to come. The relief map will be interesting to the public, as well as useful for the administration.

The buildings at headquarters have been painted and minor repairs made, and all the grading, seeding and tree planting finished, and very little money will have to be expended at headquarters in the future; a considerable part of our appropriation has been spent in getting things into shape for the proper future development of the reservation, and now we have proper facilities to devote the whole appropriation to development and maintenance.

Last year a new dam was built at Echo Lake, raising the

water a little over two feet, and it was spiled only about ten feet each side of the flume in the centre of the dam. It became evident that to make a water-tight dam it would be necessary to spile the whole length, which has been done. We also placed our water pipes under the dam, and buried them to a depth of four and one-half feet all the distance to the cottages and stable, thus preventing a recurrence of last year's trouble with frozen water pipes. A road to Echo Lake has been built, and is a fair type of road that may ultimately be built upon the lines of our fire guards.

We have made, painted and set many signs, giving distances, directions and elevations at many places upon the reservation; and upon the mountain road we have constructed a small shelter and one lookout, which have proved so useful and popular that more should be built in the spring.

The hotel was leased to Mr. William R. Howe the past season, and the observatory, as usual, was managed by our employee. I think the attendance on the mountain showed an increase over the preceding year. The visitors have been very orderly, and it has been necessary to arrest but six persons.

Two or three more traps for wild deer have been constructed, and the old ones improved by a new gate device. This season we have caught one large buck and two does.

We have trimmed the underbrush along a strip of land bordering upon the road on the westerly edge of the reservation, and are only waiting a favorable time to burn it, thus improving the former dangerous conditions. We can now burn over areas of land with a greater degree of safety, as I have purchased six hand chemical fire extinguishers, which have proved very useful.

I will again urge an appropriation for the purchase of the Sawtelle parcel, which is needed to round out the lines of the reservation, and also to give us more barn room and a place for the workmen to live.

Respectfully submitted,

GUY H. CHASE,  
*Superintendent.*



ROAD TO ECHO LAKE.



## FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

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Amount in hands of State Treasurer, January, 1904,	. . .	\$674 70
Paid on orders for real estate,	. . . . \$350 00	
Paid on county reimbursement order,	. . . . 324 70	
	<hr/>	\$674 70





True Meridian

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7

36

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